

Day Three: Explaining Work

Objectives

Participants will:

1. Understand the techniques of explaining work and developing crew skills.
2. Explain tasks and develop crew members so that every employee has a chance to become a competent and productive contributor.



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Reading - Discussion

Maintenance Training

The two large areas of TMD training are:

Equipment Training

- based on operational needs
- classes initiated by REs and RBMEs
- student selection follows the TRINFO process
- training conducted by Equipment Operator Instructors (EOIs)
- followed by O-J-T provided by EOIs, crew leaders, experienced operators, or supervisors.
- leading to certifications to run pieces of equipment

and:

Crew Skills Training

- everything else that workers need to know to work together as a crew and contribute to highway or bridge maintenance operations
 - overseen and/or conducted by crew leaders and supervisors acting as instructor/coaches
- leading to useable skills, efficient crews and a reinforcement of the role of the leader

Discussion***TRINFO Turn Down*****The Situation:**

You have just told Jim, HMW1, that his request for training on the Excavator and on the Snowblower have been turned down. Jim becomes angry and tells you that he intends to put in a grievance, because, as he says, he has seniority over a lot of people who receive training and he is always getting turned down. Jim says he only needs one more cert to qualify for HMW2 and this is just management's way of blocking his promotion.

Question:

What do you say to Jim? Why might the RE and/or the HMS2 be denying Jim's training requests or giving them lower priority? How should you respond to Jim's intention to put in a grievance? How can you help Jim meet his goal of becoming an HMW2?

Reading - Discussion

How to Train:

1. Before the work begins: describe the job in a tail gate or shop presentation.

Use the “Big Picture” approach: start with the end results. Give the learner a thorough understanding of what the work is intended to accomplish. Then, describe the major steps that get you there. Describe the cause and effect relationships between the steps by tracing the sequence backwards. As:

The goal of ditching is to get the water draining off the road.

- To do that we are going to dig ditch channels that can carry the volume of water.
- And, to do that we have to follow a grade with the machinery.
- And, to do that we have to get the machinery properly positioned and the grade marked.
- And, to do that we have to get the machinery set up safely in the right place.
- And, to do that we have to get organized back at the shop with everything we need.
- And to do that we have to make sure everybody knows “who does what,” which is why we are having this tail gate session.

If you explain the job this way, in “reverse” the crew knows where your explanation is going. Let the details come last, after the learner has a mental picture of “where the work is going.”

2. While the work is underway: focus the learner on the key skills.

Identify the key tasks of the job; decide in your own mind what you want to see done and how well you want to see it done. Then, challenge the learner put it all together into smooth performance. Use short, to the point, coaching phrases or words of encouragement that will keep their “heads up” and their minds on the important aspects of the job.

3. Arrange for practice of the key tasks.

Practice is essential. The supervisor must arrange appropriate opportunities for practice and/or for close observation of how experienced workers do the job.

4. When you see them mastering the skills: reinforce their success.

When they master a skill, celebrate! Let them know when they are doing things right.

Discussion

Training Tips:

- Explain the Basics

Why should operators bother to check the oil on a machine if they don't understand the principle of friction? Why should operators bother to check the coolant if they don't understand what heat does to an engine? Be prepared to stop and explain basic mechanical principles.

- Allow for a different pace of learning in each individual

People learn at different rates. This is why we allow more than one attempt at certification evaluations.

Within the logical limits of operational necessity, if the learner needs to go over the instructions again, go over them again. Don't impose your personal expectations on them. That would only damage their faith in you as a coach.

Small Group Exercises

In a discussion group, pick one of the jobs below and discuss how you will do the following:

- (1) How will you explain the job in a tail gate or shop session?
(Start with the end results - the goal. Then work backward through the steps that get you to that result.)
- (2) What are the key skills?
(How will you focus the learner's attention on the actions or judgements that build smooth performance?)
- (3) How will you arrange practice?
(How will you find time for the employee to practice or observe?)
- (4) How will you reinforce success?
(How will you let them know when they are doing things right?)

1. Ditching with a full crew and an excavator	9. Mowing roadside - choose any type of mower except the over-the-rail
2. Striping a curved section of road	10. Installing new or replacement signs
3. Patching pot holes	11. Repairing a head wall around a culvert
4. Cleaning a stream bed	12. Repairing damaged guide rail
5. Clearing snow with a snow blower	13. Repairing damaged bridge joints
6. Grading a section of road with a grader	14. Clearing a downed tree
7. Paving a straight section of road with a paver	15. Setting up a safety work zone in preparation of any roadside operation
8. Loading truck hoppers with salt	16. Cleaning out enclosed drainages with a sewer cleaner

Case Study***Operator Competence?*****The Situation:**

Tony and Mike come to you privately and tell you that there is something wrong with the way Taylor is using the over the rail mower. Although he has just passed his certification, they say they do not think he really knows how to use it and they do not feel safe around him when he is using it.

Questions:

What do you say to Tony and Mike? What do you ask them?
What else do you do?

Case Study

Your Mistake?

The Situation:

You and your crew are out on a drainage improvement job site. You haven't directed many jobs involving the Hydraulic Excavator. George, your HMS2, asked you this morning if you understood how to do this stretch of ditching. You told him that you did.

(Assume for this case study that you, the HMS1, have an Hydraulic Excavator certification.)

Sam, your regular Badger operator is on vacation. You are closely supervising Tony who is running the Badger this morning as part of his OJT following his training class.

The sidewall of the ditch keeps collapsing into the bottom of the ditch. This makes the job go slowly. On a break, Tony asks you in front of the rest of the crew if this is the way George wants this job to be done.

Question:

What do you say?

What should have happened differently?

Case Study***Assignment Chaos*****The Situation:**

You are organizing a pothole patching operation at the shop. You begin giving out assignments. As you get half way through, Jim suggests that instead of driving for patching material, he should be the filler. Tony suggests that he should drive the crew cab truck instead of going with Jim for the hot mix. Mary Ann suggests that she should operate the patch roller on a trainee basis instead of being assigned to flagging with Taylor. In short, everybody has a suggestion for how they want to be assigned. They are all competing with each other to raise their suggestions. No one is paying any attention to you.

Question:

What do you say?

Reading - Discussion

Coaching

Coaching is the personal relationship between a knowledgeable and trusted expert and an interested learner.

Coaches are committed to the individual's success, both in skills development and as a person.

Coaching involves:

1. Trust
2. Motivation
3. Observation
4. Feedback
5. Choices
6. Reinforcement

Case Study**He's Lazy****The Situation:**

You have had it with Tim. When he was hired four months ago, he seemed like a good choice. He's obviously bright and he seemed eager. Now however there is a problem. Tim never seems to be where he is supposed to be. When there's work to be done, you can't find Tim.

You take this problem to your HMS2, George. You say to George: "This guy is lazy! He just won't do the work and when I give him a job, I find out later that it's been done so poorly that somebody has to do it over again. I've never had a poor worker like this. It's his attitude! Tim doesn't want to participate. I want to wash this guy out on his probation. Will you help me with this?"

Questions:

What should George say to you? What should George do? How should George plan on coaching you through your task of developing a rapport with Tim and helping Tim become productive?

Start with the assumption that George is not going to take over your job by dealing with Tim himself. Assume that George's priority is to help you develop your ability to help Tim.

Summary

Explaining work and developing crew skills is a basic supervisory responsibility.

The supervisor assigns work that will help crew members learn new skills and develop competent performance.

Conducting training takes effort and planning.

The techniques for conducting training are:

1. Describe the job.
2. Find the key tasks that will build skills. Know what you are looking for in the employee's performance.
3. Arrange for appropriate practice.
4. Reinforce success.

Coaching is a personal relationship based on trust.

You teach people, not jobs.



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